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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CPAS, CASC, GY
SUBJECT: PEOPLES TEMPLE AND THE COMMUNITY AT JONESTOWN

1. DISCUSSION. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC, PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST HAS BEEN FOCUSED, OVER THE LAST YEAR, ON THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE SETTLEMENT AT JONESTOWN. LOCATED IN A REMOTE PART OF NORTHWEST GUYANA, THIS AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY CONSISTS OF A GROUP OF AMERICAN CITIZENS THOUGHT TO NUMBER IN EXCESS OF 1000 WHO HAVE IMMIGRATED TO GUYANA FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE U.S. THE PREPONDERANCE OF ATTENTION HAS TURNED AROUND THE QUESTION OF THE WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY RAISED BY THEIR NEXT OF KIN IN THE U.S., EITHER DIRECTLY OR BY USING THE INTERMEDIARY OF VARIOUS SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN.

2. RESPONDING TO THIS INTEREST, THE EMBASSY HAS ESTABLISHED A PROCEDURE WHEREBY ONE OF THE CONSULAR OFFICERS VISITS JONESTOWN ON A QUARTERLY BASIS TO PERFORM ROUTINE CONSULAR FUNCTIONS AND TO COMMUNICATE WITH VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY WHO MAY HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SPECIFIC INQUIRIES. (IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT BECAUSE OF ITS REMOTE LOCATION, TRAVEL TO JONESTOWN FROM GEORGETOWN AND BACK REQUIRES SOME THREE TO FOUR DAYS USING THE UNCERTAIN COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT FACILITIES

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AVAILABLE. TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE SITE CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE DAY BUT THIS REQUIRES THAT AN AIRCRAFT BE CHARTERED AND THAT GROUND TRANSPORT FROM THE NEAREST AIRSTRIP BE PROVIDED BY THE NEAREST GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE.) SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN THREE SUCH VISITS AND THE PROCEDURE SEEMS TO BE FUNCTIONING SATISFACTORILY.

3. DURING THE CONSULAR VISITS IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED THAT THE LOCAL GUYANESE ADMINISTRATION EXERCISES LITTLE OR NO CONTROL OVER THE JONESTOWN COMMUNITY, AND THAT THE SETTLEMENT'S AUTONOMY SEEMS VIRTUALLY TOTAL. THIS IS DUE TO A VARIETY OF REASONS WHICH INCLUDE THE FACT THAT THE AREA IN QUESTION IS REMOTE AND THUS THE GOVERNMENT'S RATHER PRIMITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY IS ALREADY OVERSTRAINED BY ITS OBLIGATIONS TO THE GUYANESE CITIZENS LIVING IN THE REGION, AS WELL AS AN UNDERSTANDABLE DIS-

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INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE LOCAL OFFICIALS TO BOTHER WITH AN APPARENTLY SELF-SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY OF NON-GUYANESE WHO OBVIOUSLY ARE NOT ACTIVELY SEEKING ANY EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH THE GUYANESE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THEIR SETTLEMENT IS LOCATED.

4. WHAT WE HAVE, THEREFORE, IS A COMMUNITY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS EXISTING AS A SELF-CONTAINED AND SELF-GOVERNING UNIT IN A FOREIGN LAND AND WHICH, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, IS FURNISHING TO THE RESIDENTS ALL OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SUCH AS CIVIL ADMINISTARTION, POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, ETC., NORAMLLY PROVIDED BY A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN ITS TERRITORY.

5. GIVEN THE NATURE OF MANY OF THE INQUIRIES, BOTH

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PRIVATE AND CONGRESSIONAL, CONCERNING THE WELFARE/WHEREABOUTS OF VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE RESIDENTS OF JONESTOWN, AS WELL AS MANY OF THE ARTICLES APPEARING IN THE PRESS WHICH HAVE ALLEGED THAT INDIVIDUALS WERE BEING HELD IN THE COMMUNITY AGAINST THEIR WILL, THE LACK OF ANY OBJECTIVE ELECTED OR APPOINTED POLITICAL PRESENCE IN JONESTOWN RAISES A LEGAL QUESTION WHICH THIS MISSION IS NOT QUALIFIED TO ANSWER.

6. THE EMBASSY IS NOT, OF COURSE, IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE ANY CONTROL OVER PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZENS; HOWEVER, PRIVATE AMERICANS TRAVELING TO OR RESIDENT IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY ARE EXPECTED TO OBSERVE AND CONFORM TO THE LAWS OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT. CONVERSELY, CAN THE HOST GOVERNMENT BE OBLIGED TO EXTEND ITS GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL AND THE PROTECTION OF ITS LEGAL SYSTEM OVER AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP OF ALIENS RESIDING WITHIN ITS TERRITORY?

7. RECOMMENDATION: IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE OFFICE OF THE LEGAL ADVISER REVIEW THE SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE, AS WELL AS OTHER PERTINENT DATA CONCERNING THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE AND THE JONESTOWN COMMUNITY WHICH ARE AVAILABLE IN CA/SCS IN THE DEPARTMENT. IF, AFTER SUCH REVIEW, AND ASSUMING THAT THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION POSED IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH IS AFFIRMATIVE, IT IS REQUESTED THAT WE BE INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO DISCUSS THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE COMMUNITY AND REQUEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT EXERCISE NORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OVER THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY TO INSURE THAT ALL OF ITS RESIDENTS ARE INFORMED AND UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE SUBJECT TO THE LAWS AND AUTHORITY OF THE GOG AND THAT THEY ENJOY THE PROTECTION OF THE GUYANESE LEGAL SYSTEM.

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